

**CLAIMS:**

Cancel all claims of record and substitute new claims 47 to 74 as follows:

47. A support stand comprising

- a. a continuous ground engaging flat base of predetermined shape and thickness,
- b. a plurality of slotted vertical support members each having an upright portion and a base portion, said support members communicating with said continuous ground-engaging flat base, with said upright portion of each said vertical support member having a flat planar surface, and said upright portion being of sufficient height to hold a flat plane display item in a vertical position without tipping over,
- c. a means of slidably connecting said vertical support members to said ground engaging flat base,
- d. a means of slidably adjusting the location of said vertical support members on said base, relative to one another, such that the distance between said vertical support members is infinitely variable from complete closure to the maximum possible distance, with said upright portion of each said vertical support member remaining perpendicular to said base at any point of adjustment and,
- e. a means of affixing said vertical support members in a given location on said ground-engaging flat base, without the use of tools, without depending on the weight of the display item being held, without applying compressive force against the item being held, and without removing said ground engaging flat base from the ground, such that a desired aperture is thereby created between said vertical support members, whereby a flat plane display item of varying thickness and weight can be placed into said aperture created between said vertical support members, such that said display item is held perpendicularly to said ground-engaging flat base, and such that said display item is held with minimal pressure or friction to prevent marring or damage to said display item.

48. The support stand of claim 47 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base has

an elongated rectangular shape.

49. The support stand of claim 47 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base is made of metal.
50. The support stand of claim 49 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base is made of metal and coated with a rust-resistant plating material.
51. The support stand of claim 47 wherein said slotted vertical support members have an L-shape, and wherein said bottom portion of each said slotted vertical support member is flat and continuous.
52. The support stand of claim 51 wherein said slotted vertical support members having an L-shape shall communicate with said continuous ground engaging flat base along said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shape.
53. The support stand of claim 52 wherein said slotted vertical support members having an L-shape shall have a guide slot in said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shape.
54. The support stand of claim 53 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base shall have one or more fixed guide pins, such that said guide slot in said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shaped vertical support member may be placed over said fixed guide pins, enabling said L-shaped vertical support member to slide across a predetermined area on said continuous ground engaging flat base.
55. The support stand of claim 54 wherein at least one of said fixed guide pins is threaded.

56. The support stand of claim 55 wherein each said threaded fixed guide pin is threadedly mated with an oppositely threaded tri-spoked manual adjusting knob of sufficient diameter to be easily hand-tightened down on said fixed threaded guide pin compressing said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shaped vertical support member against said continuous ground engaging flat base, such that said L-shaped vertical support member will be fixed in a specific location on said continuous ground engaging flat base without the use of tools, and without inverting the support stand.

57. The support stand of claim 47 wherein one or more of said plurality of vertical support members are permanently fixed in a predetermined location on said continuous ground-engaging flat base, such that said upright portion of each said fixed vertical support member remains perpendicular to said base.

58. The support stand of claim 57 in which said plurality of vertical support members is comprised of one or more said vertical support members which are permanently fixed to said continuous ground engaging flat base, and one or more said slidably adjustable vertical support members which may be temporarily fixed in a location on said continuous ground engaging flat base selected by the user.

59. The support stand of claim 58 wherein said fixed and non-fixed L-shaped vertical support members are made of metal.

60. The support stand of claim 59 wherein said fixed and non-fixed L-shaped vertical support members made of metal are coated with a rust resistant plating material.

61. A support stand comprising

- a. a continuous, ground engaging base of predetermined shape and thickness, and having wheels for mobility,
- b. a plurality of slotted vertical support members each having an upright portion and a base portion, said support members communicating with said continuous ground-engaging flat base, with said upright portion of each said vertical support member having a flat planar surface, and said upright portion being of sufficient height to hold a flat plane display item in a vertical position without tipping over,
- c. a means of slidably connecting said vertical support members to said ground engaging flat base,
- d. a means of slidably adjusting the location of said vertical support members on said base, relative to one another, such that the distance between said vertical support members is infinitely variable from complete closure to the maximum possible distance, with said upright portion of each said vertical support member remaining perpendicular to said base at any point of adjustment and,
- e. a means of affixing said vertical support members in a given location on said ground-engaging flat base, without the use of tools, without depending on the weight of the display item being held, without applying compressive force against the item being held, and without removing said ground engaging flat base from the ground, such that a desired aperture is thereby created between said vertical support members, whereby a flat plane display item of varying thickness and weight can be placed into said aperture created between said vertical support members, such that said display item is held perpendicularly to said ground-engaging flat base, and such that said display item is held with minimal pressure or friction to prevent marring or damage to said display item.

62. The support stand of claim 61 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base has an elongated rectangular shape.

63. The support stand of claim 61 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base is made of metal.

64. The support stand of claim 63 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base is made of metal and coated with a rust-resistant plating material.

65. The support stand of claim 61 wherein said slotted vertical support members have an L-shape, and wherein said bottom portion of each said slotted vertical support member is flat and continuous.

66. The support stand of claim 65 wherein said slotted vertical support members having an L-shape shall communicate with said continuous ground engaging flat base along said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shape.

67. The support stand of claim 66 wherein said slotted vertical support members having an L- shape shall have a guide slot in said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shape.

68. The support stand of claim 67 wherein said continuous ground engaging flat base shall have one or more fixed guide pins, such that said guide slot in said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shaped vertical support member may be placed over said fixed guide pins, enabling said L-shaped vertical support member to slide across a predetermined area on said continuous ground engaging flat base.

69. The support stand of claim 68 wherein at least one of said fixed guide pins is threaded.

70. The support stand of claim 69 wherein each said threaded fixed guide pin is threadedly mated with an oppositely threaded tri-spoked manual adjusting knob of sufficient diameter to be easily hand-tightened down on said fixed threaded guide pin

compressing said flat and continuous bottom portion of said L-shaped vertical support member against said continuous ground engaging flat base, such that said L-shaped vertical support member will be fixed in a specific location on said continuous ground engaging flat base without the use of tools, and without inverting the support stand.

71. The support stand of claim 61 wherein one or more of said plurality of vertical support members are permanently fixed in a predetermined location on said continuous ground-engaging flat base, such that said upright portion of each said fixed vertical support member remains perpendicular to said base.
72. The support stand of claim 71 in which said plurality of vertical support members is comprised of one or more said vertical support members which are permanently fixed to said continuous ground engaging flat base, and one or more said slidably adjustable vertical support members which may be temporarily fixed in a location on said continuous ground engaging flat base selected by the user.
73. The support stand of claim 72 wherein said fixed and non-fixed L-shaped vertical support members are made of metal.
74. The support stand of claim 73 wherein said fixed and non-fixed L-shaped vertical support members made of metal are coated with a rust resistant plating material.